

2004 CALIFORNIA AMERICORPS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) SUMMARY

Background and Fund Availability: The Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV) has issued its 2004-05 AmeriCorps Request for Proposals (RFP). Through this RFP, community organizations throughout the state can compete for funding to expand high-impact community service opportunities for Californians in their area. Funded programs will begin in the fall of 2004.

Known as the domestic Peace Corps, AmeriCorps provides Americans with full- and part-time opportunities to perform intensive community service in the areas of education, the environment, public safety or other human needs. AmeriCorps participants, known as members, perform services such as tutoring, restoring backcountry wilderness trails, organizing neighborhood watches, and performing family home visits. AmeriCorps programs recruit, select, and train their own AmeriCorps members, design and operate their own local programs, and are responsible for providing funds and other resources to match the federal funds they receive through their AmeriCorps grant.

Actual available funding is dependent upon the Corporation for National and Community Service's final appropriation in the 2004 Federal Budget Act. The size of individual grants is dependent on the number of AmeriCorps members involved in the program. GO SERV's 2002-03 portfolio of programs contained grants ranging from \$110,840 to \$3.6 million, with an average grant size of \$539,079.

Key Elements: The 2004 RFP contains several key elements for AmeriCorps, including:

- Increased emphasis on performance measurement and evaluation;
- Continued requirement to integrate volunteer recruitment and management into AmeriCorps program designs;
- Review of a sustainability plan for the proposed AmeriCorps program as part of the selection process;
- Continued support for funding priorities in the areas of foster youth, disaster preparedness and response, volunteer recruitment and management, federal college work-study, and support for faith-based and/or small community-based organizations; and,
- The addition of funding priorities to support afterschool programming and low performing schools.

Grant Parameters and Eligibility: Basic grant parameters and eligibility requirements include:

- Applicants should request no fewer than 20 full-time equivalent (FTE) AmeriCorps members for their program. GO SERV will review compelling exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis. No applicant will be allowed to request fewer than 10 FTE members.
- All AmeriCorps programs are built around a partnership that includes at least three independent organizations. At a minimum, this partnership must have at least one public and one private partner (non-profit or for-profit entity).

Program Design: AmeriCorps programs engage their members in a variety of different activities. These service activities will fall into one of three categories: (1) *Needs and Service Activities*, (2) *Strengthening Communities*, and (3) *Member Development*.

- *Needs and Service Activities:* AmeriCorps programs provide opportunities for communities to define their problems and to solve them. Applicants must demonstrate that their program or services provide a direct benefit that the community values, and that existing funds, volunteers or staff do not already provide this service. The program's service activities must also demonstrate positive impacts on the community it serves.
- *Strengthening Communities:* AmeriCorps strengthens communities by involving citizens directly in serving community needs. Members accomplish this goal by recruiting and managing volunteers, building the capacity of organizations to deliver more direct services through volunteers, or taking part in community awareness events such as national service days.
- *Member Development:* AmeriCorps expands opportunities by helping those who help America. Through AmeriCorps, members develop additional skills, gain valuable experience, and receive education awards that they can use to repay qualified school loans or pay for their future education. Programs are required to provide members with a training regimen that includes skills needed to perform service activities, as well as a civic education component.

Budget: AmeriCorps grants provide funding for member support costs and program operating costs. AmeriCorps funding can be used for up to:

- 85 percent of member support costs, including living allowances, FICA, worker's compensation, and health insurance, and;
- 67 percent of program operating costs, including staff, internal evaluation, administration, and other operating costs.

All other costs must be provided by the grantee in the form of matching funds. Minimum matching fund requirements are:

- 15 percent in non-federal cash for member support costs, and;
- 33 percent cash or in-kind, federal or non-federal, for program operating costs.

Technical Assistance: GO SERV will provide technical assistance to applicants in two ways:

- **RFP Overview Sessions:** GO SERV staff will conduct in-person RFP overview sessions in five locations: Fresno (November 21), Los Angeles (November 20), Oakland (November 19), Sacramento (November 18), and San Diego (November 19). For locations and details, visit www.goserv.ca.gov/grants/currentopps.asp.
- In order to ensure that all applicants have access to the same information, GO SERV will also post answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) on its website. Applicants can view FAQs or submit a question at www.goserv.ca.gov/grants/ameriCorpsfaq.asp.

All completed applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 5, 2003.